



Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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EPA OK'S \$1.5 MILLION FOX RIVER CLEANUP PLAN GRANT TO WDNR

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 today announced it has approved a \$1.5 million grant to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The funding supplements previous grants totaling \$2 million during Fiscal Years 1997-1998, for a total of \$3.5 million.

The grant supports WDNR's work on a remedial investigation and feasibility study, which will provide comprehensive engineering, planning, and scientific analysis to support the proposed cleanup plan for the Fox River and Green Bay. A late 1999 completion date for WDNR's proposed plan was anticipated. However, the proposed plan is now expected to be released in late spring 2000.

The additional funds and time will allow WDNR to respond to public comments and to incorporate them into the draft plan, released in February, 1999. New data on PCB concentrations in sediments, water, fish, and birds will also be included in the report.

EPA has requested that the work be expanded to include a complete remedial investigation, a feasibility study with alternative evaluations, and

a risk assessment for both human and ecological health for the entire bay of Green Bay. This is in addition to the work already done for 39 miles of the Fox River.

The expanded scope was recommended by EPA's National Remedy Review Board, an internal panel composed of scientist-policymakers in EPA. The board provides to EPA regions recommendations and advice on large and costly proposed cleanups for environmental integrity, cost effectiveness, and consistency with national policy.

"EPA is committing these additional resources--and time-- in an effort to provide the most thorough, scientifically comprehensive analysis possible," said Regional Administrator Francis X. Lyons. "Expanding the scope of the study to include Green Bay should, by no means, be taken as an indicator that EPA envisions large-scale cleanup of the bay. However, we do need to know what the PCB impacts have been and what needs to be done to reduce additional environmental pollution in the future."

After revisions are made, WDNR and EPA will release the study which will include a proposed cleanup plan and a public-comment period.

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